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Financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

Budget performance of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 and proposed budget for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Appropriation for 2014/15	$318,925,200
Expenditure for 2014/15	$301,882,200
Underexpenditure for 2014/15	$17,043,000
Appropriation for 2015/16	$268,256,700
Projected expenditure for 2015/16[a]	$268,200,100
Estimated underexpenditure for 2015/16	$56,600
Proposal submitted by the Secretary-General for 2016/17	$268,832,500
Recommendation of the Advisory Committee for 2016/17	$268,624,600

[a] Estimates as at 29 February 2016.

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I. Introduction

1. **The recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in paragraphs 33 and 39 below would entail a reduction of $207,900 to the proposed budget of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.**

2. During its consideration of the financing of UNISFA, the Advisory Committee met representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 21 April 2016. The documents reviewed and those used for background by the Committee are listed at the end of the present report. The Committee's detailed comments and recommendations on the findings of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, and on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations, can be found in its related reports (A/70/803 and A/70/742).

II. Budget performance for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015

3. By its resolution 68/258 B, the General Assembly appropriated an amount of $318,925,200 gross ($316,844,600 net) for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015. Expenditure for the period totalled $301,882,200 gross ($299,829,200 net). The resulting unencumbered balance of $17,043,000, in gross terms, represents 5.3 per cent of the appropriation.

4. An analysis of variances is provided in section IV of the performance report for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 (A/70/574). Lower requirements were attributable mainly to:

(a) Military observers ($1,428,100, or 19.2 per cent), owing mainly to higher-than-budgeted actual average vacancy rates because of delays in the issuance of visas for new personnel;

(b) Military contingents ($5,283,000, or 3.9 per cent), owing to the limited deployment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, resulting in a higher-than-budgeted actual average vacancy rate and lower-than-budgeted requirements for standard troop cost reimbursement, contingent-owned equipment (self-sustainment) and mission subsistence allowance;

(c) International staff ($236,200, or 0.9 per cent), attributable mainly to lower costs for danger pay owing to the higher number of days spent by staff members outside the mission and higher-than-budgeted actual average vacancy rates;

(d) Official travel ($63,900, or 5.0 per cent), attributable mainly to a lower number of trips conducted for training purposes, owing to the replacement of some of the planned external training with alternative training methods (see para. 35 below);

(e) Ground transportation ($4,600,400, or 44.6 per cent) attributable mainly to lower-than-budgeted actual consumption of fuel and lower-than-budgeted

requirements for the acquisition of vehicles, owing to the limited deployment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, lower-than-budgeted average price of fuel per litre and lower-than-budgeted requirements for spare parts owing to delays in the establishment of a local systems contract;

(f) Air transportation ($14,472,500, or 30.1 per cent), owing mainly to the non-deployment of three tactical helicopters and the use of helicopters from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on a cost-reimbursement basis, resulting in lower costs for the rental and operation of helicopters and lower-than-budgeted consumption of fuel, lower-than-budgeted average price of fuel per litre, lower-than-budgeted costs for the rental and operation for fixed-wing aircraft and lower ground handling charges owing to the waiver of landing fees by the Governments of the Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda;

(g) Medical ($106,600, or 21.9 per cent), attributable mainly to lower-than-budgeted costs for aeromedical evacuation, owing to the use of mission air assets rather than commercial airlines.

5. The lower requirements were partly offset by higher requirements under:

(a) United Nations police ($229,500, or 24.4 per cent), attributable mainly to the lower actual average vacancy rate (52 per cent) as compared with the budgeted vacancy rate (65 per cent), offset in part by lower-than-budgeted requirements for travel on emplacement, rotation and repatriation;

(b) National staff ($115,400, or 6.9 per cent), attributable mainly to an increase in salary scales that came into effect during the reporting period, offset in part by higher-than-budgeted vacancy rates;

(c) General temporary assistance ($245,100, or 17.5 per cent), attributable mainly to a lower-than-budgeted actual vacancy rate;

(d) Facilities and infrastructure ($4,152,200, or 9.2 per cent), attributable mainly to increased requirements for alteration and renovation services for projects delayed in the previous period and for the acquisition of miscellaneous supplies for construction activity using in-house capacity. The higher requirements were offset in part by reduced requirements for maintenance services, owing to delays in the procurement process for a maintenance services contract; lower-than-budgeted requirements for generator fuel, owing to lower-than-budgeted fuel prices and lower consumption relating to the limited deployment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, and lower-than-budgeted requirements for the acquisition of prefabricated facilities, accommodation and refrigeration equipment, given that existing stock was sufficient to meet mission requirements;

(e) Other supplies, services and equipment ($4,738,000, or 15.6 per cent), attributable mainly to: higher reliance on individual contractors for maintenance and security services owing to delays in the procurement process and inability to find suitable vendors for those services; and higher-than-budgeted requirements for bank charges. The increased requirements were offset in part by the reduced requirements for mine detection and mine clearing services because the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism ground patrols were not conducted (see para. 45 below).

6. The comments of the Advisory Committee on the information presented in the performance report on individual objects of expenditure can be found, where

relevant, in the discussion of the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 (A/70/701) in the paragraphs below.

III. Information on performance for the current period

7. The Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 21 March 2016, a total amount of $1,312,992,000 had been assessed on Member States in respect of UNISFA since its inception. Payments received as at the same date amounted to $1,236,462,000, leaving an outstanding balance of $76,531,000. As at 21 March 2016, the cash position of the mission was $69,596,000. Taking into account the three-month operating reserve of $43,828,000, the remaining cash balance was $25,768,000.

8. The Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 31 December 2015, payments totalling $62,630,000 had been made in 2015 for troop costs up to 31 October 2015 and an amount of $11,427,000 was owed for the period from 1 November to 31 December 2015. As at 31 December 2015, payments totalling $36,660,000 had been made in 2015 for contingent-owned equipment up to 30 September 2015 and the balance owed amounted to $19,615,000.

9. In respect of death and disability compensation, as at 29 February 2016, a total amount of $923,000 had been paid for 43 claims, while 4 pending claims were outstanding. **The Advisory Committee expects that all outstanding claims will be settled expeditiously.**

10. The Advisory Committee was provided with the following table on the incumbency, as at 29 February 2016, of UNISFA military and civilian personnel for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016.

	Authorized[a]	*Encumbered*	*Vacancy rate (percentage)*
Military and police personnel			
Military observers	225	133	40.9
Military contingents	5 101	4 400	13.7
United Nations police	50	17	66.0
Civilian personnel			
International staff	155	121	21.9
National staff			
National Professional Officers	3	3	–
National General Service staff	86	71	17.4
United Nations Volunteers	32	31	3.1
General temporary assistance			
International staff	13	11	15.4

[a] Represents the highest authorized/approved strength for the period.

11. The Advisory Committee was provided with the current and projected expenditure for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, with the reasons for variances. Expenditure for the period as at 29 February 2016 amounted to

$214,645,700 (gross). At the end of the current financial period, the estimated total expenditure would amount to $268,200,100, against an appropriation of $268,256,700, leaving a projected unencumbered balance of $56,600.

IV. Proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017

A. Mandate and planning assumptions

12. The mandate of UNISFA was established by the Security Council in its resolution 1990 (2011) and most recently extended, to 15 May 2016, by the Council in resolution 2251 (2015). The overall objective of the Force is to support the implementation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, allowing for returns and ensuring the protection of civilians and support for the peaceful administration of the Abyei Area, as well as support for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism in creating a safe and demilitarized border zone (see A/70/701, para. 2).

13. In paragraph 12 of the proposed budget (A/70/701), it is reported that the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism is operational and integrated teams, consisting of United Nations monitors and representatives of the Sudan and South Sudan, are conducting monitoring and verification patrols within the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone. It is also stated that work is under way to complete the site at Gok Machar and to establish the remaining two sector headquarters at Malakal in South Sudan and Buram in the Sudan.

14. The following planning assumptions are set out by the Secretary-General:

(a) UNISFA will continue to engage with the parties on the need to implement the terms of the Agreement and to resume meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee and the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, and encourage the establishment of the joint institutions;

(b) The overall security situation in the Abyei Area will remain stable but unpredictable;

(c) UNISFA will seek to prevent intercommunity clashes, including during the seasonal migration of Misseriya nomads and the gradual return of Ngok Dinka internally displaced persons;

(d) The conflicts in the Sudan and South Sudan will continue to have a negative impact on the security situation in the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and to delay the full operationalization of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism;

(e) The presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war will continue to be a security concern (see A/70/701, paras. 15-20).

15. In the report, it is further stated that, in the 2015/16 period, UNISFA will provide assistance to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism to monitor and verify the border and seek to secure the continued cooperation of the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan and of their respective interlocutors. Mine action operations will focus on hazardous area surveys and the clearance of

explosive threats in the Abyei Area and within the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (paras. 23-25).

16. With regard to military operations, it is indicated that the mission is currently reconfiguring its military contingents and plans to replace its heavy units (tank and artillery) with a lighter reserve force, placing emphasis on increased mobility and reduced reaction times. The repatriation of the heavy units and their equipment is planned to be completed by 30 June 2016 and the deployment of the lighter reserve force by 30 June 2017, with a temporary reduction in funded troop levels and contingent-owned equipment (para. 29).

17. With regard to air operations, it is indicated that UNISFA plans to reduce its rotary-wing fleet by two aircraft through the use of surface transportation to transport troops and their personal baggage to and from Abyei during the dry season. In addition, the mission had negotiated lower contractual prices for UNISFA air operations and a revised sharing arrangement for the fixed-wing CRJ aircraft with UNMISS and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). However, pending an agreement allowing for the completion of the Athony airfield, UNISFA has postponed its plans to utilize its fixed-wing aircraft to support troop deployments, rotations and other logistical operations from the airfield. UNISFA will continue to manage its air assets through centralized planning and decentralized execution and as a result has positioned its aircraft in Abyei, Wau, Kadugli and Entebbe, Uganda (para. 28).

18. With regard to construction, it is indicated that, during the 2016/17 period, the mission will begin the expansion of the Abyei camp, with a focus on the creation of hard-standing areas, upgrading and drainage of the camp roads and the replacement of aged prefabricated structures and building components consisting of both accommodation and ablution units. The expansion of the camp has been delayed since 2013/14 owing to external factors and is expected to take two fiscal periods to complete. In addition, the mission will undertake the construction of roads and carry out upgrades within the four new camps (Dungop, Goli, Tajalei and Marial Achak) being established during the 2015/16 period. It is stated in the report that those projects are critical for the implementation of mandated activities and for the improvement of living conditions in the camps (paras. 26-27).

19. In the report, it is also stated that UNISFA will continue its efforts to mitigate its impact on its surrounding environment, placing particular focus on solid and liquid waste treatment and disposal. In that regard, the mission plans to acquire new wastewater treatment and supply equipment during the 2016/17 period in order to replace older malfunctioning equipment and to construct oxidation ponds and leach fields for treated wastewater, allowing the reuse of stored water for irrigation and engineering projects (para. 32).

B. Regional mission cooperation and partnerships

20. In the report, the Secretary-General indicates that the mission will maintain regular and close interaction with his Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan in order to synchronize action that can ensure continued compliance by the parties with their obligations under the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and decisions of the African Union, and the various agreements that they have signed. In addition, UNISFA will continue to collaborate with the African Union-United

Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur in the establishment and operation of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism site at Buram and with UNMISS at Gok Machar and Malakal.

21. With regard to cooperation with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, UNISFA will coordinate with agencies, funds and programmes in the provision of humanitarian assistance, the protection of civilians and the implementation of the recommendations of the strategic review, in particular with regard to the facilitation of intercommunal dialogue and efforts to improve law and order (see A/70/701, para. 36).

22. In the report it is further stated that, as a client mission of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, UNISFA will continue to receive administrative back-office support in the areas of onboarding and separation, benefits and payroll, vendor payments, entitlement and official travel, claims processing (such as education grants and reimbursement for mission-related travel), cashier services, training and conference services, transport and movement control and information technology services.

23. In its report on peacekeeping operations for the 2014/15 period (A/70/5 (Vol. II)) the Board of Auditors makes recommendations regarding UNISFA in a number of areas. The Advisory Committee trusts that UNISFA will take prompt action to address the weaknesses identified by the Board.

C. Resource requirements

24. The proposed budget for UNISFA for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 amounts to $268,832,500, representing an increase of $575,800, or 0.2 per cent, compared with the approved resources for 2015/16. The proposed budget provides for the deployment of 225 military observers, 5,101 military contingent personnel, 50 United Nations police officers, 157 international staff, 90 national staff and 32 United Nations Volunteers, as well as 7 international temporary positions. An analysis of variances is provided in section III of the proposed budget.

1. Military and police personnel

Category	*Authorized 2015/16*[a]	*Proposed 2016/17*	*Variance*
Military observers	225	225	–
Military contingent personnel	5 101	5 101	–
United Nations police	50	50	–
Total	**5 376**	**5 376**	–

[a] Represents the highest level of authorized strength.

25. The estimated requirements for military and police personnel for 2016/17 amount to $141,110,900, reflecting an increase of $11,001,100, or 8.5 per cent, compared with the appropriation for 2015/16. The proposed increase for 2016/17 is mainly attributable to: (a) the non-inclusion of deductions for absent or non-functional contingent-owned major equipment; and (b) the application of lower delayed deployment factors than in 2015/16 for military observers (35 instead of

40 per cent), military contingents (19 instead of 22 per cent) and United Nations Police (50 instead of 55 per cent) (see A/70/701, paras. 61-63).

26. **The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the requested resources for military and police personnel.**

2. Civilian personnel

Category	*Approved 2015/16*[a]	*Proposed 2016/17*	*Variance*
International staff	155	157	2
National staff[b]	89	90	1
United Nations Volunteers	32	32	–
General temporary assistance	13	7	(6)
Total	**289**	**286**	**(3)**

[a] Represents the highest level of approved strength.

[b] Includes National Professional Officers and national General Service staff.

27. The estimated requirements for civilian personnel for 2016/17 amount to $32,178,100, reflecting an increase of $1,322,200, or 4.3 per cent, compared with the appropriation for 2015/16. The increased requirements under civilian personnel for 2016/17 are mainly attributable to higher requirements under: (a) international staff (1,975,400, or 7.6 per cent), owing to the proposed establishment of two posts (1 P-5 and 1 P-4), the proposed transfer of six international posts from Entebbe to Abyei, where remuneration is higher, and the proposed application of a lower vacancy rate (20 per cent) than in the current period (22 per cent); and (b) United Nations Volunteers ($409,900, or 39 per cent), owing to the proposed application of a lower vacancy rate (10 per cent) than in the current period (40 per cent). The higher level of resources would be offset in part by reduced requirements under: (a) national staff ($93,400, or 5.9 per cent) attributable to the exclusion of posts transferred to the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/307; and (b) general temporary assistance ($969,700, or 45.9 per cent) owing to the proposed abolishment of six Field Service positions.

Recommendations on posts and positions

28. The Secretary-General proposes a net reduction of three posts and positions resulting from the increase of two international and one national staff posts, offset by a decrease of six Field Service positions funded under general temporary assistance as follows:

(a) In the Conduct and Discipline Section it is proposed that one post of Chief of Conduct and Discipline (P-5) be established, to strengthen the conduct and discipline functions of UNISFA. The incumbent would serve as the principal adviser to the Head of Mission and proactively maintain liaison with the military and police components of the mission to provide strategic advice, guidelines and relevant training and briefings on matters relating to conduct and discipline. It is stated in the report that the current staffing of one post of Conduct and Discipline Officer (P-4) does not allow for sufficient capacity to provide the necessary support to the senior management of the mission in the implementation of the United Nations three-pronged approach to addressing misconduct, including sexual exploitation and

abuse, through prevention, enforcement and remedial action (see A/70/701, para. 39);

(b) In the Conduct and Discipline Section, under executive direction and management, it is proposed that one post of Team Assistant (national General Service) be established, the incumbent to report directly to the Chief of Conduct and Discipline and provide assistance in the preparation of various reports and the coordination of training and awareness activities (see ibid., para. 39);

(c) In the Office of the Principal Officer under component 1, security, governance and border monitoring, it is proposed that one post of Child/Women Protection Adviser (P-4) be established and the incumbent tasked with developing and leading the implementation of a civilian protection strategy in Abyei focused on the specific needs of children and women. It is proposed that the civilian protection functions of UNISFA be strengthened and more targeted protection activities developed, in the light of the increase in the returnee population to Abyei and the rise in the number of incidents involving women and children (see ibid., para. 44);

(d) In the Engineering Section under Service Delivery Services in the support component, it is proposed that six Field Service general temporary assistance positions be abolished, owing to the suspension of construction projects relating to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism as a result of the uncertain political situation (see ibid., para. 47). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the mission would focus on construction projects relating to the renovation of mission headquarters and the replacement of prefabricated facilities, utilizing the existing engineering staff.

29. **The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's staffing proposals.**

3. Operational costs

Apportioned 2015/16	*Proposed 2016/17*	*Variance*
$107,291,000	$95,543,500	($11,747,500)

30. The estimated operational requirements for 2016/17 amount to $95,543,500, reflecting a decrease of $11,747,500, or 10.9 per cent, compared with the appropriation for 2015/16. The decrease is attributable mainly to lower requirements under air transportation and other supplies, services and equipment, offset in part by increased requirements under facilities and infrastructure.

Official travel

31. The proposed resources for official travel amount to $1,144,000, reflecting a decrease of $98,000 (7.9 per cent) compared with the apportionment of $1,242,000 for 2015/16. The Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed amount comprised $804,000 for non-training-related travel and $340,000 for training-related travel.

32. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with information on the quarterly compliance rate of UNISFA with the 16-day advance purchase policy during the 2014/15 period, which showed that only 41.9 per cent of travel arrangements — 203 of a total of 485 — were in compliance. **The Advisory**

Committee stresses the need for better planning of travel. It is of the view that the UNISFA rate of compliance with the 16-day advance purchase policy should be improved, and expects that further efforts will be made in that regard.

Official travel, non-training

33. The Advisory Committee was informed that expenditure for official travel, non-training, in 2014/15 amounted to $1,032,600, reflecting an increase of $184,600 (21.8 per cent) compared with the approved resources of $848,000 for the period. Upon request for an explanation, the Committee was informed that the increase was related to higher requirements for within-mission travel for both the substantive and support components of the mission, with a higher-than-planned number of trips undertaken to the sectors for ongoing technical support to the troops and the facilitation of rotation activities. The Committee was also provided with a table showing the breakdown of travel within and outside the mission area during the 2014/15 period. From the information provided, the Committee notes that a significant proportion of the trips undertaken were related to support requirements. **The Advisory Committee reiterates that UNISFA should increase its efforts to consolidate meetings taking place at the same destination and to use alternative means of communication whenever possible. The Advisory Committee is of the view that further efforts can be made to use travel resources more efficiently and recommends a 5 per cent reduction in the requirements proposed for official travel, non-training, for the 2016/17 period.**

Official travel, training

34. With regard to the lower-than-budgeted expenditure for training-related official travel during the performance period (see para. 4 (d) above), the Advisory Committee requested further details on the alternative training methods employed and whether those methods were continuing in the 2015/16 period and were reflected in the budget proposals for 2016/17. The Committee was informed that, during the 2014/15 period, the mission had arranged to have training sessions on dangerous goods and Umoja end-user training conducted locally, rather than having staff members travel to training venues outside the mission area, as originally planned. The in-house training method had been used in part to facilitate a higher number of trainees and total savings of some $92,000 had been achieved. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the approach taken to use alternative, cost-effective approaches for the delivery of training, which allowed for a larger number of participants at lower cost. The Committee encourages UNISFA to continue to pursue such efforts in order to use training resources effectively and efficiently. The Advisory Committee trusts that the lessons learned at UNISFA in that regard will be shared with other peacekeeping operations and widely applied, as appropriate.**

Facilities and infrastructure

Construction projects

35. The proposed resources for facilities and infrastructure amount to $29,688,500, reflecting an increase of $7,438,700 (33.4 per cent) compared with the apportionment of $22,249,800 for 2015/16. As indicated in paragraph 20 above, the increased resources are required for the expansion of the Abyei camp and related

construction projects. The Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed resources included: (a) acquisition of prefabricated facilities, accommodation and refrigeration equipment to replace aged prefabricated structures and building components consisting of both accommodation and ablution units ($3.1 million); (b) architectural and demolition services relating to construction activities for the expansion of the Abyei camp and road construction and upgrades at the four new camps being established during the 2015/16 period ($4.2 million); and (c) acquisition of additional power generators for the four new camps ($1.2 million).

36. The Advisory Committee requested further information on the measures being taken by the Secretariat to address the delays experienced in the execution of construction projects. The Committee was informed that the Secretariat had developed and promulgated in October 2014 the Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support guidelines on the governance of major construction projects, which required missions to establish a construction project management group, with comprehensive details on the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders for the implementation of major construction projects, including processes for project initiation, planning, execution, monitoring and controlling and close-out. The Department of Field Support had assumed an oversight and monitoring role to ensure compliance by field missions with the guidance. Upon enquiry, the Committee was provided with a list of the activities planned in the short, medium and long terms to bring the military camps up to the same standards as the civilian accommodation. The list is annexed to the present report.

37. The Advisory Committee enquired as to the assurances that could be provided regarding the ability of the mission to implement the construction projects proposed in the 2016/17 period, given the prevalent conditions in the mission area. The Committee was informed that the main challenges facing the mission included the lack of access for contractors to project sites and the banning of Sudanese vendors from delivering construction materials to the Abyei Area. The Committee was also informed that the senior management of the mission was currently in discussion with Sudanese officials in relation to construction projects and the delivery of materials, with the issue of accessibility expected to be resolved in the near future. The mission anticipated a positive outcome of the current situation, based on the latest dialogue between the two communities involved in the conflict. Furthermore, both parties had agreed on the need to facilitate improvement in living conditions and infrastructure development in the Abyei Area.

38. **The Advisory Committee notes the Secretary-General's statement that the construction projects planned for 2016/17 are critical for the implementation of mandated activities and for the improvement of living conditions in the camps, and welcomes the start of construction activity, which has been delayed since 2013/14. The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to monitor progress closely and make every effort to ensure that the planned construction activities are completed according to schedule and that living conditions in the camps are improved without further delay. The Advisory Committee further recommends that the Secretary-General be requested to report on progress in his next budget submission.**

Ground transportation

39. The proposed resources under ground transportation for 2016/17 amount to $2,571,700, reflecting an increase of $453,800 (21.4 per cent) compared with the apportionment of $2,117,900 for 2015/16. It is indicated in the budget document that the proposed increase is mainly due to the replacement of nine light passenger vehicles that will be written off by June 2017 and the acquisition of an armoured vehicle. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the mission currently had two armoured vehicles dedicated to the Head of Mission and the Force Commander. The additional armoured vehicle proposed in the budget was required to support ongoing operations in terms of rescue missions of UNISFA personnel in case of crossfire incidents during frequent field missions to the sectors and also to support VIP delegation visits. The Committee was also informed that the projected cost of the armoured vehicle was $145,760. **The Advisory Committee is not convinced of the need for a third armoured vehicle and therefore recommends against approval of the Secretary-General's proposal. The related freight charges should be reduced accordingly.**

Information technology

40. The proposed resources under information technology for 2016/17 amount to $4,653,000, reflecting a decrease of $821,600 (15 per cent) compared with the apportionment of $5,474,600 for 2015/16.

41. The Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed requirement included a provision of $226,200 for spare parts and supplies, reflecting an increase of $125,900 (125.5 per cent) over the apportionment of $100,300 for 2015/16. Upon enquiry as to the reason for the significant increase in the acquisition of information and communications technology (ICT) equipment, the Committee was informed that the requirement was mainly due to the large number of items of equipment, such as high-frequency radios, that had been transferred from the United Nations Mission in the Sudan to UNISFA and had since passed their life expectancy. Additional requirements included a provision for microwave radio links to new permanent sites, Global Positioning System units for mapping and equipment for low-latency satellite equipment for improved support for centralized applications. Furthermore, in order to improve the ICT infrastructure at mission headquarters and team sites, including new permanent sites, the 2016/17 provision for spare parts included expendable infrastructure materials, such as cabling and wireless antennas. In addition, owing to the harsh operating environment and procurement and logistics lead times, the provision also included acquisition of critical spares equipment to ensure a high level of operational availability. The Committee was also informed that the mission applied Secretariat-wide life-cycle replacement standards in the replacement of ICT equipment, which had been approved by the Chief Information Technology Officer.

42. **While recognizing the need to maintain adequate stocks of spare parts to ensure a high level of operational availability of ICT equipment, the Advisory Committee trusts that attention will be paid to achieving an optimum level of stocks, and thereby avoiding excessive holdings of spare parts and risks of obsolete inventories.**

43. With regard to the low-latency satellite equipment for improved support to centralized applications, the Advisory Committee recalls that the O3B (or "other

3 billion" networks)[1] low-latency satellite technology project initiated in 2015/16 is being rolled out to five missions (MONUSCO, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, UNISFA and UNMISS) and the Regional Support Centre at Entebbe in the 2016/17 period. **The Advisory Committee expects that detailed and disaggregated information on the total expenditure related to the implementation of the low-latency satellite technology project at UNISFA will be provided in the relevant performance reports.** The Committee discusses the issue further in its reports on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (see A/70/742 and A/70/755).

Other supplies, services and equipment

Mine action

44. A total amount of $20,293,100 is proposed under other supplies, services and equipment, reflecting a decrease of $5,152,400 (20.2 per cent) compared with the apportionment of $25,445,500 for 2015/16. A breakdown of the proposed requirements is provided in paragraphs 56 and 57 of the budget document. The Secretary-General indicates that mine action capacity is provided by the United Nations Mine Action Service to identify and clear mines and explosive remnants of war in the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and the Abyei Area, to ensure freedom of movement for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism and to assist in weapons and ammunition control, storage and disposal (A/70/701, para. 8). The Advisory Committee comments further on mine detection and mine-clearing services in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/70/742).

Bank charges

45. The Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed resources for other supplies, services and equipment included a provision of $185,000 for bank charges, reflecting an increase of $110,000 (146.7 per cent) compared with the apportionment of $75,000 in 2015/16. Upon enquiry as to the reasons for the significant increase, the Committee was informed that the provision for bank charges for the 2016/17 period was estimated on the basis of the actual average cost of UNISFA transactions effected from July 2011 to December 2014, which were not known at the time of the preparation of the 2015/16 budget estimates. **The Advisory Committee trusts that an update on the actual charges for 2015/16 will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

V. Conclusion

46. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of UNISFA for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 are indicated in section V of the performance report (A/70/574). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the unencumbered balance of $17,043,000 for the period from**

[1] O3b Networks is a commercial provider of low-latency, broadband satellite services to connect the "other 3 billion" people who have limited or no access to broadband for reasons of geography, political instability or economics and whose client segments include markets in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific.

1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 and other income/adjustments amounting to $10,896,400 for the period ended 30 June 2015, be credited to Member States.

47. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of UNISFA for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 are indicated in section IV of the proposed budget. **Taking into account its recommendations in paragraphs 33 and 39 above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the estimated budget requirement be reduced by $207,900, from $268,832,500 to $268,624,600. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly:**

(a) **Appropriate the amount of $268,624,600 for the maintenance of the mission for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017;**

(b) **Assess the amount in subparagraph (a) above at a monthly rate of $22,385,383, should the Security Council decide to continue the mandate of the mission.**

Documentation

- Report of the Secretary-General on the budget performance of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 (A/70/574)
- Report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 (A/70/701)
- Report of the Board of Auditors on United Nations peacekeeping operations for the 12-month period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 (A/70/5 (Vol. II), chap. II)
- Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on observations and recommendations on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/70/742)
- Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the budget performance of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 and proposed budget for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/839/Add.16)

Annex

List of activities planned in the short, medium and long terms to bring the military camps up to the same standards as the civilian accommodation

1. Short term (ongoing):

   (a) Replacement of 80 old ablution units and erection of 70 additional units with new sewage connections and septic tanks by 30 April 2016;

   (b) Improvement of roads and parking lots by June 2016 (depending on the timing of the delivery of construction materials);

   (c) Installation of wastewater treatment plants by 30 June 2016 in the three main sector headquarters.

2. Medium term:

   (a) Replacement of 150 old prefabricated accommodation units by 30 June 2017;

   (b) Installation of new wastewater treatment plants in four camps by April 2017;

   (c) Improvements to security lighting by June 2017;

   (d) Establishment of and improvements to recreation areas by June 2017.

3. Long term:

   (a) Replacement of the remaining old prefabricated units by June 2018 and erection of additional units;

   (b) Installation or replacement of wastewater treatment plants in the remaining camps by June 2018.